THOUGHTS

ON THE

DOCTRINE

OF

Universal Salvation.

AS PREACHED, MAINTAINED, AND PROPAGATED,

BY

Mr. JOHN MURRAY,

And others of the people called Universal Baptists.

BY A YOUTH OF THIS CITY.

"*Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?*" ABRAHAM.
"*The wicked shall be turned into Hell.*" JEHOVAH.
"*I will also give you mine opinion.*" ELIHU.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, (BY PRICHARD AND HALL,) AND SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS IN PHILADELPHIA, NEW-YORK AND BOSTON. 1790.

(Price one-eighth of a dollar.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF THE

UNITED STATES:

THIS PAMPHLET

(wrote in the defence of TRUTH,)

IS

WITH EARNEST RRAYERS FOR THEIR WELFARE

AND PROSPERITY,

MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY

THEIR FELLOW-CITIZEN,

THE AUTHOR.

THOUGHTS, &c.

HAVING lately had an opportunity of perusing the articles of faith and plan of church government, as established by the society of Universal Baptists, on the 29th of May, 1790; I was led into a few reflections on their nature and tendency, which I now offer to the public eye. Should any one ask, what induced me to write on this topic, I would answer in the words of *David*, "Is "there not a cause?" There certainly is. For when the truths of the gospel, and the good of precious and immortal souls are at stake, it is the indispensable duty of every Christian to stand forth and defend the cause of truth, against such invaders. I do not expect in this essay to escape the censure of the critic, nor the frowns of the opposite party; but let me intreat them, and all into whose hands it may fall, to lay aside prejudice, to peruse these lines with candour, and to compare what I have written with the word of God, those sacred oracles of divine truth, the only rule of faith and practice. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Having thus introduced the subject, I only add, that if this feeble effort to defend the truth, is crowned with success, the end of the author will be abundantly answered.

The plan I mean to pursue in the following essay, is as follows:

I. To attempt to prove from scriptural arguments, and the writings of the best of men since the time of the apostles, that the doctrines held by Mr. *Murray* and the Universalists, are in themselves false, erroneous, unscriptural

ral and ſophiſtical, and as it reſpects mankind, pernicious, dangerous and deſtructive.

II. I ſhall attempt to addreſs Mr. *Murray* and his colleagues, on the danger that attends broaching ſuch tenets. And,

III. I ſhall cloſe the whole with a brief addreſs to the inhabitants of this and every other city, where theſe doctrines are, or may be propagated.

Firſt, I am to attempt to prove theſe doctrines to be falſe, erroneous, unſcriptural, &c.

It muſt however be allowed, that ſome parts of the articles of their faith, &c. are calculated to cultivate good morals, peace and tranquility among mankind, and ſo far they are very well.

But when conſidered in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and compared with the word of God, and the goſpel-plan of ſalvation as revealed in that word; how erroneous, how unſcriptural they appear, how contrary to the doctrines of the goſpel, to the precepts of the meek and lowly Jeſus, and how pernicious to the ſouls of men!

It appears that the drift of Mr. *Murray*'s doctrine and ſcheme of preaching, is to prove, that all mankind without diſtinction ſhall, (through the tender mercies of God) be finally admitted into the realms of bliſs and eternal happineſs. Will Mr. *Murray* and his abettors ſupport this doctrine? Oh! bluſh for ſhame, and hide your guilty heads. To the law and to the teſtimony, if any man ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in him.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding every pious man prays and ſincerely deſires (if conſiſtent with the will of Heaven) that eternal ſalvation might be graciouſly given to all mankind, and the ſacred oracles of divine truth are ſo richly and plenteouſly ſtored with kind and precious promiſes, which abundantly ſet forth the loving kindneſs and tender mercies of the Lord; yet, let Mr. *Murray* and his abettors know, that repentance for, and forſaking of ſin, are the conditions of theſe promiſes. I will recite a few of them. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteom. man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." *Iſaiah* lv. 7. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none elſe." *Iſaiah* xlv. 22. "Say unto them, As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael!" *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls: For my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light." *Matt.* xi. 28, 29. "Aſk and ye ſhall receive, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you." "All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out." *John* vi. 37. "Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 *Tim.* ii. 4. "Go and preach the goſpel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned." *Mark* xvi. 16. "Who is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them." *Heb.* vii. 23. Theſe are great and precious promiſes, and are your favorite portions

portions of ſcripture. I frankly confeſs they are mine, and every true Chriſtian's. But do not let us pervert and wreſt them to our own deſtruction. Let us examine them carefully and compare them with other parts of the ſame divine writ. We muſt not; we cannot divide the divine attributes, nor ſeparate the perfections of Deity; for as he is a God of mercy on the one hand, ſo he is a God of inflexible juſtice on the other: he will by no means clear the guilty: he is to be feared as well as praiſed.

But Mr. *Murray* and his abettors endeavour to deſtroy this fear, by aſſerting that all ſhall be finally ſaved! *Solomon*, who was a far wiſer man than Mr. *Murray*, was ſo far from deſtroying this fear, that he declares it to be the beginning of wiſdom, and a fountain of life to depart from the ſnares of death. Let us ſuppoſe any community under heaven, who had framed a code of laws to which they had annexed no fear of puniſhment, for the breach of thoſe laws;—what would be the conſequences? The laws would not be obeyed, and anarchy and confuſion would follow. What but the fear of puniſhment deters many from robbery, murder, and many other enormous crimes their vicious inclinations would lead them to? So in a ſpiritual ſenſe. Does not the fear of eternal torments in a future ſtate, deter many from the practice of thoſe enormous ſins they would otherwiſe commit? It ſurely does. It is a reſtraint upon their inordinate luſts and paſſions. But Mr. *Murray* and his abettors endeavour to take away that reſtraint, by inſinuating that ſinners ſhall not die eternally! Pretty deluſion! 'tis an old artifice of the Devil to ſeduce mankind. But what ſays the word of God? "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." *Heb.* "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." *Pſalm* ix. 17. "Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire, and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt; this ſhall be the the portion of their cup." *Pſalm* xi. 6. "The Lord preſerveth

preſerveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he deſtroy." *Pſalm* cxlv. 20. "The wicked ſhall be driven away in his wickedneſs, but the righteous hath hope in his death." *Proverbs* xiv. 32. "The ſinners in *Zion* are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the hypocrites. Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?" *Iſaiah* xxxiii. 14. "And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake; ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt." *Dan.* xii. 2. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good, to the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the reſurrection of damnation." 1 *John* v. 29. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to thoſe that trouble you; and to you who are troubled reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 *Theſſ.* i. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Theſe are parts of the word of God, as well as the others, and of equal truth and veracity. But Mr. *Murray* and his friends pervert theſe to ſuit their own purpoſes, and profeſs to tell us, that all the puniſhments ſinners are to endure for ſin, are inflicted upon them in this life, and that after the death of the body, they ſhall ſuffer no more, but be eternally happy. Can this be the caſe? God forbid. Let us, but for a moment, conſider the nature of ſin: It is infinite, and therefore requires an infinite puniſhment, or an infinite atonement. But how is it infinite in its nature? Becauſe of the Being it

is committed againſt: for inſtance, if I ſtrike a fellow-ſubject, it is only an aſſault; but if I lift my hand againſt my ſovereign, it is high treaſon, and will be puniſhed with a ſevere death. So it is with the bleſſed God: he is infinite, and therefore ſinning againſt him, is of an infinite nature, and he neither can, nor will clear the guilty. He has poſitively ſaid, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." And our Saviour ſays, that "If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins, and if ye die in your ſins, whither I go ye cannot come." But Mr. *Murray* aſſerts that men dying in an unregenerate ſtate, ſhall enter that Kingdom. How dare you give the lip of infinite truth the lye? I think, Mr. *Murray* and his friends had better take the word of God as it is revealed to us, and believe his juſt threatenings as well as his precious promiſes. Chriſt tells us there are but few ſaved, and the reaſon is obvious; they will not come unto me (ſaith Chriſt) that they might have life. Forbear then, to pervert, curtail, and wreſt the ſacred writings any more, in ſupport of the ſophiſtical tenets you propagate, and remember in what a ſolemn manner the canon of ſcripture is cloſed: "For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." *Rev.* xxii. 18, 19.

But there are ſome of the Univerſal Baptiſts, who do not go ſo far as Mr. *Murray*, but profeſs that ſinners ſhall be puniſhed in hell for a time, yet do not allow that puniſhment to be eternal; but that after they have ſuffered in that ſtate a ſeries of years, according to the number

number and nature of their ſins, they ſhall be releaſed, and admitted into a ſtate of glory. For my own part, I find many paſſages of the ſacred writings, which affirm that ſinners ſhall be ſent to hell; but never could find one which gave me any reaſon to believe, they ſhould come out of that ſtate. Of this claſs is Mr. *Winchester* and many others; and they make great uſe of that text of our Lord, where ſpeaking to his followers, he ſays, "Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whilſt thou art in the way with him; leſt at any time he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon. Verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing." *Matt.* v. 25, 26. *Luke* xii. 58. They ſay that theſe words imply a condition, that the laſt farthing may be paid; or, if underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe, that the uttermoſt ſin may be atoned for; and when they have atoned for them, they ſhall be releaſed from that ſtate of miſery: For, ſay they, it would be unjuſt in the bleſſed God to inflict puniſhment, when offence no longer remains. I beg leave to aſk them one ſimple queſtion, "Is blaſphemy a ſin, or is it not?" If it is, then I aſſert, that their puniſhment will never end; for, I read in the revelations, that they blaſphemed God, becauſe of their pains, and repented not to give him glory. Now if blaſphemy be a ſin, then they muſt be continually adding ſin to ſin, and the number can never poſſibly be done away: and if repentance is neceſſary in order to the enjoyment of eternal happineſs, they muſt be for ever miſerable. The ſame great apoſtle, when ſpeaking of the ſtate of the damned, ſays, "The ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no reſt day nor night." *Rev.* xiv. 11. And our Lord when ſpeaking of hell, deſcribes it as a place where "The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." *Mark* ix. 48, and when he is teaching his diſciples, whom they ſhould fear, he does it in theſe words, "Fear not them

which

which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him who is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell." *Matt.* xviii. 28. "Yea, I ſay unto you, fear him." *Luke* xii. 5. The immortal *Milton*, in his Paradiſe Loſt, deſcribes hell as

" A dungeon horrible on all ſides round
" As one great furnace flam'd, yet from thoſe flames
" No light, but rather darkneſs viſible
" Serv'd only to diſcover ſights of woe,
" Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where peace
" And reſt can never dwell; hope never comes
" That comes to all; but torture without end
" Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
" With ever-burning ſulphur unconſum'd:
" Such place eternal juſtice had prepar'd
" For thoſe rebellious, here their priſon ordain'd
" In utter darkneſs, and their portion ſet
" As far remov'd from God, and light of Heaven,
" As from the center thrice to the utmoſt pole."

And I remember another eminent author, whoſe works I have often read, and who, in ſpeaking of the ſtate of ſinners in hell, thus breaks out,

" Then, then we may ſuppoſe the wretch to cry,
" O! if this dreadful God would let me die;
" And not torment me to eternity.
" Infinite years in torment muſt I ſpend,
" And never, never, never find an end?
" Ah! muſt I live in torturing deſpair
" As many years as atoms in the air?
" When theſe are gone, as many thouſands more
" As grains of ſand that crowd the ebbing ſhore;
" When theſe are paſt, as many on the march,
" As ſtarry lamps that gild the heav'nly arch;

" When

" When theſe are o'er, as many to enſue
" As ſtems of graſs on hills and dales that grew;
" When theſe are gone, as many yet behind
" As leaves of foreſts ſhaken with the wind;
" When theſe are paſt, as many millions more
" As moments in the millions paſt before;
" When all theſe doleful years are ſpent in pain,
" And multiplied by myriads again,
" Till numbers drown the thought, could I ſuppoſe
" That then my wretched years were at a cloſe:
" This would afford ſome hope, but ah! I ſhiver
" To think upon that awful word, " For Ever."
" Here in a gulph muſt I tormented lie,
" Blaſpheming God, to all eternity;
" The growing torments I endure for ſin
" Are never done, but always to begin."

But to return to Mr. *Murray* and his adherents, whoſe doctrines and preaching, have abundantly more tendency to do miſchief and propagate libertiniſm and corruptneſs, than any other in the whole world; and conſequently call for the ſtrongeſt reſiſtance; and I am happy to ſay, that it has been oppoſed both from the pulpit and the preſs. I was informed by a friend of mine, that after Mr. *Murray* had been delivering one of his harangues, a pious Quaker of this city ſtood up, acted the part of a faithful defender of the truth, ſpoke much to the purpoſe, and by ſcriptural arguments overthrew the whole of his doctrine, and proved it falſe and ſophiſtical.

Indeed if Mr. *Murray* and his colleagues were to attempt to prove, that the ſun, that glorious fountain of light and heat, by advancing in a ſlow gradation to the north tropic cancer, is not the cauſe of our ſummer; and his retreating to the ſouth tropic capricorn, is not the viſible cauſe of our winter; it would not be more inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with real truth, than their new-fangled ſyſtem of divinity.

Why are the writings of the ancient fathers, reformers, and bleſſed martyrs; together with thoſe eminent puritan writers who lived in the laſt century; I ſay, what is the reaſon the writings of theſe the beſt of men that ever lived ſince the days of the apoſtles, and whoſe blood has been ſpilt in defence of the truth, ſhould be rejected to receive Mr. *Murray*'s ſophiſtical tenets, which attempt to pervert the ſcriptures and to overthrow the whole of the goſpel-plan of ſalvation.

Let me for the ſake of illuſtration adopt a ſimile: Suppoſe a gentleman hires a ſteward, to whoſe management he entruſts his property, with particular orders how to carry on his buſineſs, ſo as not to waſte or deſtroy any of his goods, on his peril: Now if the ſteward is unfaithful to his truſt, if he diſobeys his maſter's commands, neglects his buſineſs, and deſtroys his property; is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe in ſuch a caſe, that his maſter will pay him wages or give him advancement? No, he ſurely will not; but will rather make him pay the damages, or cauſe him to ſuffer the puniſhment due to his crimes, by ſending him to priſon.

The eternal God, hath conſtituted his creature man, his ſteward; he has placed in him a ſoul immortal as himſelf; he has bleſſed him with the lamp of reaſon dwelling in him; he has given him his revealed mind and will, as the rule of his obedience; and above all, has pointed out to him the way of ſalvation through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: theſe are talents he has committed to his charge, and has ſaid to him, "Occupy till I come:" And when he ſhall come, and demand of every individual an account of his ſtewardſhip, is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that

that thoſe who have abuſed their reaſon, diſobeyed his laws, contemned his ſacred word, deſpiſed his authority, dared his vengeance, ſlighted his mercy, provoked his juſtice, and wilfully rejected the way of ſalvation as revealed in the goſpel; thoſe that have lived diametrically oppoſite to every precept moral and divine; that have crucified the Lord of life afreſh, and put him to open ſhame; and that have trod under foot the blood of the covenant: I ſay, is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe that ſuch perſons (dying in that ſtate) will meet the approbation of God; that he will approve their conduct, that he will admit them into the kingdom of his glory, and welcome them with a "Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou "into the joy of thy Lord?" It cannot be: God is a being of ſuch conſummate holineſs, that he cannot behold ſin without abhorrence; and of ſuch inflexible juſtice, that he will by no means clear the guilty: but that he will puniſh his enemies, and that puniſhment will be awful, infinite and eternal!

For as ſin is of an infinite nature, and man is a finite being; ſo the law of God does not require a ſatisfaction according to the ability of the tranſgreſſor, but according to the nature of the tranſgreſſion; (hence aroſe the neceſſity of Chriſt's being the Saviour of his people, and that he ſhould lay down his life for their ſins; for as ſin was of an infinite nature, though committed by a human creature, ſo neither angels nor men not having infinity and humanity in one perſon, were able or ſufficient to atone for ſin, by all the ſufferings they could poſſibly undergo. But Chriſt the eternal Son of God, being both God and man, and having joined infinitude and humanity in one perſon, was conſequently able to ſatisfy divine juſtice; to make an atonement for the ſins of his people, and to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, which ſhall be unto all, and upon all them that believe; and therefore

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it is utterly impoſſible for man to be able to make ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice; conſequently they muſt ſuffer its direful vengeance. Neither is there any ſtate of repentance in the grave: For as the tree falls, ſo it lies: As death leaves us, ſo judgment will finds us. There are no purgatories. There are but two places in the other world for the reception of the immortal ſoul, Heaven and Hell. And the moment the ſoul is diſmiſſed (by the cold hand of death) from its tabernacle of clay, that moment it is for ever fixed either in a ſtate of everlaſting felicity, or elſe in a ſtate of everlaſting and unutterable woe: and if in that ſtate of woe,

" Not all their pains, nor all their blood,
" For their old guilt atones:
" Nor the compaſſions of a God,
" Shall hearken to their groans." WATTS.

But again, ſinners (dying ſo) are utterly unfit for the ſociety of Heaven; were it poſſible they could be admitted there.

I think it will be univerſally allowed, that the ſwine which wallow in the mire, are no ways fit for the entertainment and ſociety of a prince in the elegant apartments of his palace: and I venture to aſſert, without ſtraining the truth, that all ungodly perſons who die in their ſins, are as unfit, yea, more ſo, for the ſociety of the heavenly world.

This brings to my mind a paſſage written by one of the moſt polite and ingenious authors of the preſent age, and who is allowed by the beſt judges in ſacred things, to be the firſt claſſical writer in divinity we have extant: I mean the celebrated *Hervey*. His words are,

" Hark!

" Hark! a doleful voice with ſudden ſtarts, and hideous
" ſcreams; it diſturbs the ſilence of the peaceful night.
" It is the ſcreech-owl; ſometimes in frantic, ſometimes
" in diſconſolate accents, uttering her woes. She flies the
" vocal groves, and ſhuns the ſociety of all the feathered
" choir. The blooming gardens and flow'ry meads have
" no charms for her; obſcene ſhades, ragged ruins, and
" walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts.
" Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens
" a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poiſonous adder
" hiſſes. The ſprightly morning which awakens other
" animals to joy, adminiſters no pleaſure to this gloo-
" my recluſe: even the ſmiling face of day is her aver-
" ſion, and all its lovely ſcenes create nothing but un-
" eaſineſs.

" So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the ungodly, were it
" poſſible to ſuppoſe their admiſſion into the chaſte and
" bright abodes of endleſs felicity. They would find no-
" thing but diſappointments and ſhame, even at the foun-
" tain-head of happineſs and honour. For how would
" the tongue, habituated to profaneneſs, taſte any delight
" in the harmonious adorations of Heaven? How could
" the lips, cankered with ſlander, reliſh the raptures of
" everlaſting praiſe? Where would be the ſatisfaction of
" the vain beauty, or ſupercilious grandee? Since in
" the temple of the ſkies no incenſe of flattery would be
" addreſſed to the former, nor any obſequious homage
" paid to the latter. The ſpotleſs and inconceivable pu-
" rity of the bleſſed God would flaſh confuſion on the laſ-
" civious eye. The envious mind muſt lie on a rack of
" ſelf-tormenting paſſions, to obſerve millions of happy
" beings ſhining in all the perfections of glory, and ſola-
" cing themſelves in the fulneſs of joy. In ſhort, the
" unſanctified ſoul, amidſt holy and triumphant ſpirits,
" even in the refined regions of bliſs and immortality,

" would be like this melancholy bird, diſlodged from her " darkſome retirement and impriſoned under the face of " day.

" I would beg of the reader to obſerve, with what " emphaſis and propriety our Lord touches this important " ſubject, in his memorable reply to *Nicodemus*; ' Veri- " ly, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, " he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' I wave " the authority of the ſupreme Judge, and ſpeak with the " condeſcenſion of a teacher in *Iſrael*; though I might, " without being liable to the leaſt controul, paſs it into a " ſovereign decree; that unrenewed mortals, who are " ſlaves to corrupt appetites, ſhall not enter the habitations " of the juſt. I rather chuſe to repreſent it as a caſe ut- " terly impoſſible, and charge the calamity, not upon " divine ſeverity, but upon human folly.

" Such perſons, from the very nature of things pre- " clude themſelves; they incapcitate their own minds; and " contrarieties muſt be reconciled before they in their un- " regenerate condition can be partakers of thoſe ſpiritual " and ſublime delights.

Having thus diſcuſſed the firſt head; and as I intend brevity in this eſſay; I now proceed,

II. To addreſs Mr. *Murray* and his colleagues, who propagate theſe tenets, on the danger attending ſuch a propagation. And Oh! that the Spirit of light and wiſdom may, in a particular manner, ſo influence my heart, enlighten my mind, and guide my pen, that I may be enabled to write with propriety, faithfulneſs and truth; and that what may be thus written, may be made profitable to all it concerns.

I have

I have endeavoured to prove your doctrine falſe and erroneous, &c.

Without being uncharitable, I believe the motives of your preaching is for the loaves and fiſhes; and you had better deny the whole of divine revelation at once, than to pervert and corrupt it in the manner you do, by poiſoning men's ſouls with falſe doctrine.—The danger in propagating falſe doctrines appears, if we conſider,

I. To keep back any part of revealed truth, or to broach any doctrines contrary to the word of God, and to pervert that ſacred word, in order to ſupport thoſe doctrines, is to offer a direct affront and inſult to its divine author Jehovah.

And this is a truly ſolemn conſideration, when we conſider what a great and dreadful being that God is, with whom we have to do. He is a God, that is jealous of his honour; he cannot be deceived, and he will not be mocked. He has denounced a dreadful woe, againſt thoſe that propheſy falſely, and tell lies in his name.

Suppoſe a man that is intruſted with an embaſſy from one prince to another, in ſome diſtant country, in which the lives of many of the prince's ſubjects are at ſtake, and the ambaſſador inſtead of faithfully delivering his embaſſy, keeps back ſome material parts of it, or frames ſome new embaſſy of his own, and wreſts his prince's meſſage to ſuit his own purpoſe, at the expence of the lives of his fellow-citizens; would not every perſon allow, that he had offered the higheſt indignity to his prince, that he had merited his wrath, and deſerved the ſevereſt puniſhment. How much greater then, is the crime of thoſe, and how much heavier the puniſhment thoſe are expoſed to, who

under

under a profeſſion of the miniſterial character, wilfully (either from the fear of men or love of ſordid gain) keep back or pervert any part of the word of God! Their crime is as much greater, as the ſoul is of more conſequence than this mortal life, and as God is greater than any earthly prince.

II. By propagating errors, you poiſon men's ſouls, and are the awful means of leading them to miſery and deſtruction.

Of all the doctrines that ever was propagated, yours is the moſt pleaſing to human nature. Man has an inſtinct in him, which makes him love life, and fear death; he loves to gratify his carnal inclinations, yet often dreads the conſequence; therefore that doctrine, which takes away the idea of a ſtate of future puniſhment and eternal ſuffering, muſt certainly be pleaſing to men, becauſe it relieves the mind from that anxiety and bondage it otherwiſe would labour under.

But though thus pleaſing it is highly dangerous, in as much as by taking away the idea of a future ſtate of puniſhment, you give men room to go on in a courſe of impiety, which (notwithſtanding all your arguments) muſt, if the Bible be true, certainly end in everlaſting deſtruction; and by thus deluding them, you lead them on (as it were blindfold) to ſin, that grace may abound.

Through ſuch doctrines men are led to entertain wrong conceptions of the eternal God, and of the nature of his holy laws, as well as of the atonement, that Chriſt made for ſin; they think, that he is a God of abſolute mercy, without remembering his inflexible juſtice; they think, that his righteous and holy law does not require that ſtrict obedience that it really does.

But

But here you perhaps will ſay, " Do not we in all our diſcourſes attempt to diſcourage vice, and to promote a virtuous and holy life and converſation, by ſetting forth the beauties of religion and the pleaſures of a virtuous life." I admit you do, and as it reſpects the real Chriſtian, this is ſufficient. But as the goſpel is to be preached to all men, it is neceſſary, that the terrors of the law, and the awful end of a vicious life ſhould be ſet forth alſo. For men by nature know nothing of the pleaſures of religion, it is their averſion; they prefer the gratifications of their corrupt appetites and of their carnal deſires, to the ſubſtantial pleaſures of communion with God, and fellowſhip with the ſaints of life. And from a reception of your doctrine, they are led to argue thus: " Seeing all the puniſhment we are to endure for ſin, is in this life; and after death we ſhall be admitted into the realms of bliſs, equally with thoſe who led a religious life. Let us therefore endeavour to live as happy as we can, and ſatisfy our inclinations, by living in the pleaſure and enjoyment of this world." Thus they argue, but however they may now think, yet at the ſolemn hour of death, or at the day of judgment, they will find their error, when, alas! it is too late.

Thus, by theſe tenets, you delude men, poiſon their ſouls, and lead them on to deſtruction. But,

III. By broaching ſuch tenets, you not only lead others to deſtruction, but will (if a miracle of mercy prevent not) bring certain and inevitable deſtruction upon your own ſouls. For by your deluding men with falſe doctrine, their blood will be required of your hands. Thus ſaith the Lord, " O ſon of man, I have ſet thee a watchman unto the houſe of *Iſrael;* therefore thou ſhalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man ſhall die in his

his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." *Ezek.* xxxiii. 7, 8. Compare this with that ſolemn declaration of our Lord, "Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and of the holy angels." *Luke* ix. 25. and the awfulneſs of your caſe will fully appear. How awful muſt the ſtate of that perſon be, when, on a dying bed, he looks back on his life and miniſtry, and ſees to his ſad confuſion, the blood of many ſouls (who have been poiſoned and deluded by the pernicious doctrines and lies he has propagated) laid to his charge! He looks forward and ſees an angry God, before whoſe bar he muſt ſhortly appear to give an account of his ſtewardſhip, and who ſtands arrayed in terrors, ready to inflict eternal puniſhments on his guilty head, for the breach of the truſt committed to his charge.

But to cloſe this part of the eſſay. Permit me, as a faithful monitor, to quote a few more paſſages of God's word, and when you hear them, reflect and tremble. Thus ſaith Jehovah, "Becauſe with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſad; and have ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him life: therefore ye ſhall ſee no more vanity, nor divine divinations; for I will deliver my people out of your hand." *Ezek.* xiii. 22, 23. Let me beg you to read the whole of that, and the firſt twenty verſes of the thirty-third chapter, with care and attention; alſo the third chapter of the ſame book. "They have choſen their own ways, and their ſouls delighteth in their abominations." *Iſaiah* iii. 6. "And for their cauſe, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lie, that they might be all damned, who believe not the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs." 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 11, 12.

It

It is a dreadful thing to fall out of the pews into hell; but to fall out of the pulpit into that ſtate, how much more dreadful! And it will be truly awful for that man, who, after having preached to others, is himſelf a caſtaway. God forbid that this ſhould be your caſe! To whom, and to whoſe mercy, I commend you.

Agreeably to the plan firſt laid down, I now cloſe the whole by,

III. Addreſſing myſelf to the inhabitants of this and every other city, where theſe doctrines are, or may be preached.

To you, my brethren, what ſhall I ſay? Believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they be of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world, and when you hear theſe things ſpoken, be not carried away with every wind of doctrine; but ſtable abiding in the truth, imitating the example of the noble *Bereans* of old. Who ſearched the ſcriptures daily, to ſee whether thoſe things were ſo. Examine them carefully by the word of God, that infallible rule of faith and practice, remembering what the apoſtle *Paul* ſays in his epiſtle to the *Galatians*, "If any man preach any other goſpel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accurſed. Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good, contend earneſtly for the faith as once delivered to the ſaints." We are told in the ſcriptures of truth, that there ſhould be ſome who would pervert the truth, ſo that if it were poſſible, they ſhould deceive even the elect; "For ſuch are falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt; and no marvel, for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of righteouſneſs, whoſe end ſhall be according

according to their works." 2 *Cor.* xi. 13, 14, 15. Be not deceived then, my dear friends, but diligently examine what you hear, always remembering thoſe ſolemn words of *Peter*, with which I ſhall cloſe the ſubject. " But there were falſe prophets among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction. And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of, and through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you, whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not." 2 *Peter* ii. 1. 2, 3.

Therefore, as men, citizens and chriſtians, beware!

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the preſence of his glory, with exceeding joy, be all honour and glory. Amen.

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